

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, MMOL, TW, US

SUBJECT: VISIT OF DOD OFFICIAL TO CHUNG SHAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE
AND AIDC

REF: STATE 027040

1. DR. STEPHEN W. TSAI, AIR FORCE MATERIALS LABORATORY, WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB, OHIO, VISITED TAIWAN MARCH 13 TO APRIL 2. HIS PRINCIPAL INTEREST WAS TO SEE THE AERO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER (AIDC) IN TAICHUNG AND THE CHUNG SHAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CIST) NEAR TAIPEI, AND TO DISCUSS WITH AIDC THE POSSIBILITY OF GROC F-5'S USING SOME GRAPHITE EPOXY AIRCRAFT PARTS IN A MULTI-YEAR TEST PROGRAM.

2. DR. TSAI MET WITH EMBOFFS SOON AFTER ARRIVAL AND WAS INSTRUCTED AT THAT TIME (REFTEL) NOT TO GIVE ANY IMPRESSION OF USG WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST THE ROC IN ITS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE HE BRIEFED EMBOFFS ON HIS ACTIVITIES HERE.

3. ACCORDING TO TSAI, AS A RESULT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS AIDC AND THE CHINESE AIR FORCE (CAF) EXPRESSED WILLING-
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NESS TO USE GRAPHITE EPOXY AIRCRAFT PARTS ON CAF F-5'S.

THE MATTER HAS BEEN REFERRED TO THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MND) FOR A FINAL DECISION. (FYI: USAF TO DATE HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO USE GRAPHITE EPOXY PARTS IN USAF COMBAT AIRCRAFT; MISSION OFFICERS THEREFORE BELIEVE IT LIKELY MND MAY DELAY ANY DECISION OUT OF CONCERN FOR POSSIBLE EFFECT ON CAF COMABT READINESS.)

4. IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFFS TSAI SAID HE HAD EMPHASIZED TO GROC OFFICIALS THAT HIS VISIT TO TAIWAN WAS ONLY IN PURSUIT OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AND THERE WAS NO COMMITMENT TO PROCEED WITH THE PROPOSED TEST PROGRAM.

5. DR. TSAI ALSO SAID HE HAD INFORMED AIDC OFFICIALS THAT HIS LABORATORY COULD PROBABLY TRAIN SOME OF THEIR PEOPLE IN GRAPHITE EPOXY LABORATORY, BUT NOT MANUFACTURING, TECHNOLOGY.

6. ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT DR. TSAI MAY HAVE BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING IN DISCUSSION WITH GROC OFFICIALS THAN HE ACKNOWLEDGED, EMBOFFS REMINDED HIM THAT ANY PROPOSED TESTING OR TRAINING PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE REVIEWED IN WASHINGTON AT A POLITICAL LEVEL AND POINTED OUT THAT IF THE CLEARING AUTHORITY AT USAF HEADQUARTERS (APPARENTLY A COL. TOM FERGUSON WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RELEASE OF TECHNOLOGY TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS) WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM AND THE CLEARANCE PROCEDURES INVOLVED, HE SHOULD CONTACT MR. LEVIN OR MR. FREEMAN IN EA/ROC. OTHERWISE, HE STOOD IN DANGER OF HAVING HIS PROGRAM CANCELLED AFTER EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS, BUT BEFORE BEING ABLE TO OBTAIN RESULTS.

7. DR. TSAI ASSURED EMBOFFS HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. HE PLANNED TO DISCUSS THE PROGRAMS'S FEASIBILITY WITH NORTHROP OFFICIALS IN CALIFORNIA IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS RETURN. ASSUMING MND APPROVES CAF RECOMMENDATION, TSAI SAID HE WILL RECOMMEND THAT HIS SUPERIORS REVIEW OVERALL PROGRAM AND REFER THE PROPOSED TEST PROGRAM TO WASHINGTON FOR A POLITICAL DECISION.

8. IN A MORE GENERAL DISCUSSION OF CAPABILITIES OF
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AIDC TSAI INDICATED HE WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH CAPABILITIES OF THE AIDC STAFF. HE FELT AIDC WOULD BE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING A "FLYABLE, EXPORTABLE" PLANE IN FIVE TO TEN YEARS, IF IT COULD DEVELOP THE NECESSARY ENGINE TECHNOLOGY.

9. VISIT TO CIST PROVIDED LITTLE OF VALUE AS STAFF MEMBERS HAD BEEN VERY GUARDED IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH

HIM AND RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS ANY PROGRAMS. DR. TSAI SAW CIST FIVE YEARS AGO AND COMMENTED ON ITS SIZABLE GROWTH. THIS TIME HE ONLY SAW THE MATERIALS TESTING LAB AND HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS FROM THE MISSILE DIVISION. TSAI CHARACTERIZED CIST AS A "HOBBY SHOP" WITH EVERYONE WORKING ON HIS OWN PROJECT BUT WITH LITTLE OR NO GUIDANCE. HE NOTED THAT CIST COULD PROBABLY DEVELOP THE CAPABILITY TO MANUFACTURE ITS OWN GRAPHITE EPOXY WITHIN TWO YEARS. IT WOULD PROBABLY BE YEARS BEFORE CIST COULD PRODUCE AN INVENTORY ITEM WHICH COULD FLY. UNGER

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